



## Stella McCartney

It's hard to beat Stella McCartney for content creation. Here is a designer with a famous name who planted copies of The Stella Times newspaper on every seat at the show, and then described it backstage as "a collector's item."

The newspaper featured her mission statement for the season, "Come Together," inspired by The Beatles song, which appealed to humans to live in harmony with nature. There was also a Q&A with McCartney's pal – and new collaborator – Eva Mendes; a look at the designer's new carbon-zapping denim' and liberal use of the word f-k in the headlines and images. All signature Stella.

McCartney said she wanted the spring season to be about "bringing together the Stella wardrobe, the people that I love, and all the innovation, which is so important," she said, adding, "There's a lot going on, on that runway, things that have never been seen before."

The newspaper was just the start. There were red carpet entrances – Helen Mirren! Robin Wright! Jenna Coleman! Ice Spice! Woody Harrelson even made a surprise appearance, as the crowds gathered outside the Centre Pompidou, craning their necks to see all the stars.

Before the first look even appeared, Academy Award-winner Mirren stepped onto the runway to recite the lyrics to "Come Together" as if it were a monologue or a poem, although they sometimes sounded silly without the thundery bass guitar, played by McCartney's father Paul, in the background.

The collection itself was a tale of multiple silhouettes, and proportions. Shoulders had swagger, waists were nipped and hemlines wide.

McCartney applied classic corset shapes and exaggerated, sculptural shoulders to her signature, oversize mannish jackets, and even to cute skater dresses with crinolines. At times, however, McCartney went too far with the broad shoulders.

A stylish baby-doll dress with blue embroidery, and a red crochet tutu had hemlines so wide they'd have trouble fitting through the doorway. But this is Paris, the land of the Marie Antoinette, and panniers and underskirts are making a comeback for spring.

For those who want to sail through doorways without getting stuck, Stella had solutions in the form of brightly colored, body-con gowns with long sleeves and slits up the front, and a neat, white bandage minidress which didn't take up much space.

The designer also showed off her many fabric innovations. Those feathery bits on a long lavender dress and candy pink bodysuit turned out to be painted bits of greenery, and enveloped the models like a cloud. McCartney said she'd much rather pluck greens from the ground than feathers from birds, and paid homage to her avian friends in other ways, too, with oversize puffball tops in aqua, cream and baby pink.

Other evening pieces were shiny, including a sculptural strapless dress covered in bright purple sequins which were made from recycled and bio-plastics, and seaweed-based ones grown in the lab. Some evening dresses didn't fit as well as that lovely sequin one, with bodices on gowns looking stiff and hard as breastplates.

There was a lot to take in, and the runway could have done with some editing, but you can't knock McCartney for knowing how to work the spotlight, and get her messages out there. – *Samantha Conti*





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